

Fencing Guidelines

Arizona Game and Fish Department, Habitat Branch

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Background

Fences are built to control access along roads, highways, and railroads; to protect agricultural crops; to limit access to mining operations, military installations, and private property; and for other purposes. The majority of fences are installed to control domestic livestock or exclude wildlife. Fences can be built to restrict and/or control wildlife movement; control domestic livestock, but allowing wildlife movement; or completely controlling all livestock and wildlife movements.



Fencing designs should consider the potential impacts to the wildlife inhabiting the area and should not restrict the movement of these populations unless they are needed for restriction or protections of domestic livestock or human safety. Often, fences have contributed to the decline of wildlife populations and associated mortalities. The fence type will vary, dependant on purpose, wildlife needs, and legal constraints.

For the Department's standards on fencing, please refer to the Wildlife Water Development Standards, revised April 2005. This document is currently under revision and is expected to be finalized in 2006. For a copy of current revision, please contact:

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General Recommendations

- Consider maintenance responsibilities, including dismantling these structures when no longer serving the objective for the original accomplishment
- When domestic livestock are not preset, fences within the right-of-ways and/or wildlife corridors should be removed

Pronghorn Antelope Recommendations

- No fencing should be constructed without comprehensive evaluation determining if the habitat is suitable or occupied
- Use the minimum amount to manage livestock
- Avoid fencing water holes
- New fences should be flagged between each post for visibility of the hazard
- Consider covering bottom wire with PVC pipe for visual identification

Fencing (cont.)

- Highway fencing should be removed during severe winter weather
- Fencing should be set back as far as possible from the right-of-way

Elk

- Incorporate elk jumps

Wildlife Crossings

- Constructed wire fences wherever experience indicates wildlife concentrate to cross fences
- Constructed to allow ingress and egress by targeted wildlife species without compromising the ability of the fence to prevent livestock crossing the fence

Wildlife Escape Passages

- Constructed in elk exclosure fences are required to allow movement of non-targeted wildlife through the fence

References

Lee, Raymond M.; Yoakum, James D.; O’Gara, Bart W.; Pojar, Thomas M.; Ockenfels, Richard A. 1998. Pronghorn Management Guides: Biological and management principles and practices to sustain pronghorn populations and habitat from Canada to Mexico. Pronghorn Antelope Workshop and the Arizona Game and Fish Department. (2006 update coming soon).

Yoakum, James D. 2004. Review of fencing. In press.

Statewide Pronghorn Operational Plan. 2006. In Draft.

Arizona Game and Fish Department. 2005. Wildlife Water Development Standards. Revised April 2005.